



Tuesday October 13 1953

MORAL REARMAMENT AND TRADE UNIONISM

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—May I give some facts about the report circulated by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.) attacking Moral Rearmament (M.R.A.) so well summarized by your Labour Correspondent on September 22 last. The report says that it was prepared at the request of Hind Mazdoor Sabha (H.M.S.), the Socialist trade unions of India, comprising 800,000 members, "for a definition of its (*i.e.*, I.C.F.T.U.'s) attitude towards M.R.A." Mr. Sibnath Banerjee, the President of H.M.S., has denied that either he or his executive board ever made any such request. An official of H.M.S. did make a personal, unofficial inquiry which the secretariat of the I.C.F.T.U. choose to treat as an official inquiry.

A definition of the attitude of the I.C.F.T.U. to M.R.A. can only be given by the Congress of the I.C.F.T.U., the policy-deciding authority. The report was never submitted to or voted on by the congress. Its circulation has therefore aroused many world-wide protests. To quote only one, a group of British national trade union officials at once cabled the chairman of the British Trades Union Congress, saying that "the implications in the report were untimely, unjust, and untrue." The report generally follows the Moscow attacks on M.R.A. The effective answer is the great and growing number of responsible persons attending the Caux conferences, employers, trade union leaders, individual trade unionists, business and professional men, politicians, &c., 70,000 persons from 110 countries since the last war, including 7,000 labour leaders from 68 countries.

The report charges M.R.A. with "weakening the trade union movement," "trying to upset the trade union movement," "encroaching upon trade union preserves," &c. Evidence to the contrary is suppressed and quotations when compared with the originals

show highly prejudiced editorial activity. The charges are based on the principle emphasized in the I.C.F.T.U.'s Bulletin Vol. IV, No. 18 (84) of September 15, 1953, that, "Non-trade union organizations of whatever kind are not called upon to concern themselves with trade union affairs. This also applies to Moral Rearmament." If all public opinion is to be silenced, one of our greatest constitutional safeguards is removed.

Mr. John Riffe, executive vice-president of the powerful United States Congress of Industrial Organizations, sums up the effect of M.R.A. in a statement to *The Hindu*, March 12, 1953, which was available to the authors of the I.C.F.T.U. report along with many other favourable statements not referred to in it. He says, "I see M.R.A. as: (1) the basic necessity for sound trade unionism; (2) bringing the revolutionary factor of team work into industry that is as far ahead of capitalism and Marxism as the atomic age is ahead of steam; (3) an ideological factor that makes opposing nations unite together and live in real peace."

The report talks about M.R.A.'s secret finances. There is no secrecy. M.R.A. in the United Kingdom is incorporated as the Oxford Group. Its audited accounts are lodged annually with the Board of Trade. They show for the year ended March 31, 1953, £80,796 as the income of the United Kingdom association, which includes sales of literature £24,725, and gifts £54,535. Of the gifts, 43 per cent. were under £10, 48 per cent. between £10 and £99, and 9 per cent. were £100 or more. Gifts from industrial firms were less than 3 per cent. of the total income. The accounts of M.R.A. as incorporated in other countries follow the same pattern.

I am, Sir, yours,

LYNDEN MACASSEY.

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